

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SWF-01 EB-04 SAJ-01 COME-00 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 NIC-01 /036 W

----- 121458

P R 251200Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 972

INFO DEP AGRIC WASHDC PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW UNN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

DOD WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ECRE, ECON, YO

SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL AND FLOOD SITUATION

REF : ZAGREB 0971

1. SUMMARY: RAINS AND COOL WEATHER HAVE HAD ADVERSE EFFECT ON 1974 CORN AND SUGARBEET CROP, AND HAVE DELAYED SOWING OF WHEAT. SAVA RIVER HAS INUNDATED SEVERAL VILLAGES AND MORE WIDE-SPREAD FLOODING IS THREATENED. WEATHER IMPROVING. END SUMMARY.

2. OVERALL EFFECTS OF RAIN AND COOL WEATHER ON CROPS AS FOLLOWS:

A. CORN: HARVEST OF CURRENT CORN CROP IS ESTIMATED TO BE ONLY TEN PERCENT COMPLETE AND SOME ESTIMATES PLACE DAMAGE AS HIGH AS TWENTY PERCENT

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WHEN BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY ARE CONSIDERED.

COOL WEATHER PREVENTED MUCH OF CROP FROM MATURING COMPLETELY. RAINS HAVE PREVENT EXPECTED REDUCTION IN MOISTURE OF CROP (CURRENTLY EXCESS OF THIRTY PERCENT) AND CONDITIONS ARE CONDUCIVE TO MOLD, ETC. EXISTING DRYING FACILITIES ARE NOT ADEQUATE TO DRY ENTIRE CROP AND THIS IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT GRAIN STORAGE FACILITIES ARE BEING USED IN LARGE PART TO STORE RECORD WHEAT CROP JUST HARVESTED. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SEED CORN CROP IS SUSTAINING CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE.

B. WHEAT: ONLY EIGHT PERCENT OF PLANNED WHEAT HECTARAGE HAS BEEN SOWN. EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT WHEAT SOWN AFTER THIS DATE WILL RESULT IN POOR YIELDS DUE TO POOR GERMINATION, DAMAGE BY WIND EROSION IN FIELDS WITH POOR STANDS, AND POSSIBILITIES OF WINTER KILL.

C. SUGARBEETS: IT IS REPORTED THAT BETWEEN SIXTY TO SEVENTY PERCENT OF HARVEST IS COMPLETED. HOWEVER, LARGE AMOUNTS OF HARVESTED BEETS ARE STILL IN THE FIELDS, AND DETERIORATING AS THEY CAN'T BE MOVED TO THE SUGAR FACTORIES DUE TO SOFT FIELD CONDITIONS. A SIGNIFICANT LOSS IS EXPECTED IN THIS COMMODITY EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE NO ESTIMATES AS TO EXTENT AT THIS TIME.

D. SUNFLOWER: HARVEST IS EIGHTY TO NINETY PERCENT COMPLETE BUT IF THE FARMERS ARE UNABLE TO CONTINUE THE HARVEST SOON, THE BIRDS WILL COMPLETE IT FOR THEM.

3. SAVA RIVER IS REPORTEDLY AT LEVEL NOT RECORDED IN PAST HUNDRED YEARS. SEVERAL SMALLER TOWNS ALONG 100 MILE STRETCH OF RIVER ARE THREATENED, AND FEW VILLAGES HAVE BEEN FLOODED. RIVER EXPECTED TO CREST OCTOBER 25. STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED IN SEVERAL LOCALITIES. ARMY AND VOLUNTEER UNITS ACTIVE ON DIKE REINFORCEMENT. SEVERAL HUNDRED FAMILIES EVACUATED. THERE HAVE BEEN NO CASUALTIES.

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4. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL SMALLER RIVERS REPORTED RISING TOWARD FLOOD LEVELS IN OTHER AREAS, INCLUDING SAVA TRIBUTARIES AND MONTENEGRO, SITUATION IN OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY RELATIVELY LESS SERIOUS THAN ALONG SAVAA. WEATHER DRY FOR PAST TWO DAYS, AND FURTHER SUBSTANTIAL RAINFALL NOT EXPECTED.

5. COMMENT: IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS TOTAL DAMAGE

TO THIS YEAR'S CROP BUT, IN ALL PROBABILITY, IT WILL  
MORE THAN OFFSET GAINS MADE BY BUMPER WHEAT CROP.  
THIS EVALUATION IS MADE ON BASIS OF OPTIMUM WEATHER  
FOR REMAINDER OF HARVEST PERIOD, AND ADVERSE  
CONDITIONS COULD PUT SITUATION IN CRITICAL AREA.

6. WITH DIKES ON MAJOR RIVERS HOLDING, FLOODING IS  
LOCALIZED SO FAR, AND NOT YET SERIOUS ENOUGH TO BE  
CONSIDERED DISASTER. AUTHORITIES APPEAR TO HAVE  
ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO COPE WITH LOCALIZED HARDSHIP.

7. BETTER WEATHER NOW INDICATED WOULD BRING ABOUT  
IMPROVEMENT IN OVERALL SITUATION. END COMMENT.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** METEOROLOGY, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 OCT 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974BELGRA05320  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740305-0405  
**From:** BELGRADE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19741017/aaaaaoib.tel  
**Line Count:** 129  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** ZAGREB 0971  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 MAR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <23 MAY 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AGRICULTURAL AND FLOOD SITUATION  
**TAGS:** EAGR, ECRE, ECON, YO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005